

## BOOK REVIEW

BRUCE M. PAVLIK. 2008 **The California Deserts: An Ecological Rediscovery**. (ISBN 978-0-520-25145-8, pbk.). University of California Press, 2120 Berkeley Way, Berkeley, California 94704-1012, U.S.A. (**Orders:** The University of California Press c/o California/Princeton Fulfillment Services, 1445 Lower Ferry Road, Ewing, New Jersey 08618, U.S.A.; [www.ucpress.edu](http://www.ucpress.edu), email [orders@cpfsinc.com](mailto:orders@cpfsinc.com), 1-800-777-4726, 1-800-999-1958 fax). \$27.50, 365 pp, numerous figures, graphs, images, maps, tables, references, index, and art credits, 7" × 10".

*The California Deserts: An Ecological Rediscovery*, is divided into seven sections that specifically describe the origins, discovery, climate, geology, resources, fauna, and flora that inhabit the 25 million acres that form the three deserts of California: the Sonoran, Mojave, and Great Basin Deserts. Author Bruce Pavlik threads stories of various early explorations throughout the first section of this book, providing the reader with descriptive information on how human inhabitants first found this desolate yet diverse ecosystem. Pavlik describes the extreme environment that is found within these deserts, how climate and species composition were the driving factors for shaping modern day deserts, and how most deserts are found between 10° and 30° latitude north and south of the equator. The three deserts are in fact very different, and these differences can be seen in their size, elevational range, precipitation, temperature, and communities that are present within each.

Pavlik describes the "remarkable biota" that can be found within the California desert region. A prime example is the kangaroo rat, an animal that has adapted to the harsh environment by its ability to procure water (a scarce resource) from seeds. He concludes the book by listing the current threats (e.g. fragmentation, invasive species) of this region and provides management ideas for restoring the deserts.

I found this book to be very informative and a wonderful resource for any naturalist, educator, or person that is eager to learn more about the diversity of the unique desert ecosystems of California. I believe the author enhanced this book by including a vast number of examples of the flora and fauna that are found within these regions. The images that were used throughout the book provided the reader with a vivid picture of this unique ecosystem. I would recommend this book to anyone that is interested in learning more about California deserts.—Keri McNew, MS Biology, Programs Manager, Botanical Research Institute of Texas, 500 E 4th Street, Fort Worth, TX 76102, U.S.A